

50¢ summer 1955

number 7 magazine

MILLS COLLEGE ISSUE

a quarterly of modern poetry

this is issue **7** of number

summer 1955

Mills College Guest Editor: CAMILLA SPALDING

2 TED WRIGHT: *the traveler and the prayer*
8 HENRY HUACO: poem
9 SIDNEY CARSON: poem
10 MARIE GRAYBEAL: sequence
recapitulation
12 WALTRINA FURLONG: *oh sometimes sight*
13 EMILY PAUSCH: two poems
15 A SECTION OF POETRY BY MILLS COLLEGE STUDENTS
30: *book reviews*

Editorial and publication offices: 252 Fillmore Street,
San Francisco 17, California
editor, Robert Brotherson : advisory editor, Lawrence Hart
advisory committee, Rosalie Moore, Jeanne McGahey, Don
Wobber.

ted wright

THE TRAVELER AND THE PRAYER

I. PREFACE

Moss fell across the light, and the long hair of shadows
Dripped over the dry bank and detained the water;
And all afternoon slept like the ears of spaniels.

There the dust settles in parallel poles of sunlight;
The air waits, and the drawn land
Cracks in its tightness.

Hands that the sun did summer to, hung
Their children loose against the day's diffusion:
Along the river the trees bent down like horses,

And from the open cylinder of air
Pieces of sea made up an intervention
Between the eyelid and the shaking horizon.

Between the arguing rocks, stuck on the lagging
Ledges, he looked again: gaps
Wider than death or distance.

And in his hesitation the figuring
Angles threw the air against the sky.
Lightning and heat beat their hands in the hollow.

He came in miles, behind him the dust
Fell back like bushes, and the traveling light
Picked the rust from his brown eyeballs.

II. I AM SICK, I MUST DIE

These streets are all farewells.
Not a lover but many
Year by year will turn down.
Lock me up, old mother,
To be sand, to be sand
In the devil's hand.
She wore green on her shoulders
And her lips rang my lips and
Good night to their changes.

By these streets will the lover
Go home and home.
Farewell, good mother,
Walls in their thickening
Lie on me, break like sand.
Simply done, simply drawn.
Black art, her stone.
By night and wrinkle
Undone, undrawn.

3
Wash these sheets, then, mother,
I will go ride.
Stiff there, unwinding,
Watches the breakers
Over his sweet suicide.
Is there news, is there news?
Ride rich, ride wide,
Ride and then ride
Up and down, a-down, down.

THE TRAVELER AND THE PRAYER

III. ELEGY FOR THE PAST

This being dead and into dirt
Gone, give me the grass to hurt,
Or if the grass abide this cure,
Surely the worm is not so sure.
Whatever grows and eats my loves
Like a restorative removes
And feeds what it rejects to fires
Less official than long desires.
Here is the broken administration
Of a clean, grown, drunk, bright, grave emotion.

So everyday, as night comes nearer,
One is more dark, and double clearer,
Gone is lamented, what's remembered's died
Or, in the pocket, falsified.
Roots but to feel and not to see,
Or in new ways be felt and be.
Body and body mount the source
Of an imponderable force,
Summoning out of time the action,
Grain by grain, of the tall subtraction,
While the even blood is winning
Toward one end and one beginning.

To sleep, to love, to fight, compel
Three signs and stresses: one's a bell,
Each a crime, invasion of border
Knowledge only comes by murder.
Now the ditch on which I stand
Death fills in with a crumbling hand
And puts upon the bankrupt mound
Man to mark what he could not found.
Rain, falling like blood on bone,
Liquefies the student stone,
And the idiot night conspires
Satisfaction of quick desires.
All backs grow bent or break. Breasts dry
In the hand. Women on women cry.
Tribune, column, wave and moss
Enter on the common loss
As on a stage, and in his fiction,
Deep in his rolling out and ruction,
Faces death in the introduction.

IV. PRAYER TO LOVE

5

We shall all be hanged in the closet like clothes,
And our extra fingers
Drape their bones on the windows, on the room's lips.
We will be merely incidents to each other,

THE TRAVELER AND THE PRAYER

Or stamps on closed letters, grass
Idle under hedges. And everyday, daily,
Grow wooden like men in a king's game.
Today we dance on the green squares,
To be taken tomorrow and mailed like lords
To a neutral address. Events will snap like trees.
And the traveling continue to the formal kingdom
Of rooks and water.

But I am instructed by the thin hands of street noises
Fingering our curtains, watching their eyes
Inflecting systems of brains. And what if they burst,
Either this way or the stone's way,
On the cracking avenues of noon, what if I should hold
(With bells pumping) your rocky body
As dead men shake castles, caves shaking, love being
Such as we lurk in,
Five folded hands.

Would the hills still buckle with light and my arm
Go green in the morning? We who bleed
From the knots of brains around our bodies,
Would our bones still wind up hanged?

V. SECURITY: A KIND OF PRAYER

Nor no more any tired integrities
Delude, set to watch at ruins, cumber
With Time's coarse baggage of crusades. It is
The sung more than the unsung
Whose dignities, being known, clutch at strings
Without which life is negligible guard.

The great are pathos. Byron is a game
Fair movers still play badly. Kings and kings
Go down their tunnels of obsidian,
Bequeathing quarrels only. Man is slave
As deep as he is young. We owe, we owe—
But for rare honor, not munificence.

The astounding dream, the bright-eyed hope, the cross
Suffer the evidence of things not seen,
Grow light in limit, heavy in omission,
And brothering beauty, beggar value.

7
Believer, take the faith that fronts your fear;
Beyond false notes, compose a majesty
Deriving commonly up from predicament;
Go full to genius, be cruel, be beloved.
How else, oh with what other wages could
We pay the sense?

henry huaco

He fell without sound
in the sounding sea

And the light made a hole for his gown
where the fish bloomed and clanged
like the long loved

In the rounding hills
his loose gown sang

and his limbs among the green plants
were a strange shine.

sidney carson

The parrot saw his flags
and colors in the lake
and his hands like rags
upon his face
knowing this was no other
than his own dark brother

He saw his eyes and wonder
louder in the water
than his light and leaves.

marie graybeal

SEQUENCE

When the early light is clean in the fingers
All faces straight as clocks again,
There are conversations started among strangers,
Behind their eyes the impermanent bone.

The narrow skeleton
Is cherished at cost;
Words
Turn in the head like a tool,
The early foundations
Move along a child's edge.

The most expert traveler
Will see across plains
The early history of a face;
He moves barehanded
The sun above him like a skill —
To him no other
Nor neighbor, however friendly
Will seem much larger than a bird.

Only at night
He dreams among the animals
Those portable strangers —
And the heart
Carries more than one generation.

RECAPITULATION

Out of my symptoms the intricate savage
Raises his blood,
The successful neurosis gleaming like love
(the sleeper
Not knowing his dream, though the lips move
And flesh becomes word.)

Section by section
The rain falls, the faces below water
Glow with an animal color.

But the fever
That enhances the child,
In anyone grown tall
Fails and forbids — murder
Kept out of sight beneath the land's edge.

And all private feelings,
Blurred by touch,
Become frail in the daylight.

For the savage
Is lonely, though the earth
Bends around him.

Though the heart
Keep a skill among lovers, and the body
Flame in its bones.
He will remember love like an interview,
The furious guesses made at noon.

And signs read early
In a printed season,
Are swept aside by tears.

waltrina furlong

OH SOMETIMES SIGHT

Stands in the heat of time
In his foolish grace and guilt.

Oh sometimes in the twist of sea
Or the parallel, tightening sky:
The human heart in its crowd
Of before-marvels
Falls in the cool stammer of fact,
Wanders over sand spire and hope waste
and love weed.

I would show you this place where I may live
By those hopes with the long nerves of horses;

The world's
Back stands still and the bare birds
Shock in the sky,
But that classic scene is double here with us.

And where here is
I would show you,

Though the heart in its stubborn palmistry
Stays in the shadow of love.

emily pausch

TWO POEMS

1

How young, in its empathies, the blood of the old is,
the heart still shutting on its fatal love—
for in all our choices, when was it that we
did not choose death?

And who but ourselves betrayed us;
the invented life, addicted to importance,
and the enormous fiction of our suffering.

When the fires of this house are lit,
I perceive, beneath the generations and the races,
you and I are countrymen.

II

The sleeper unlocks his memories
his difficult veins unfasten one by one,
till the unbidden is
moved from its skeleton.

Morning charters the light
the flesh returns
from the night's extinct races.

The bone assembles its arches,
and the sleeper
his empires
coming one by one to these plains
as the swallow comes
out of the long generations of rains.

A section of poetry by Mills College students

16 LUANNE EDQUIST | city
garden
and by what way
images
station

18 CATHRYN HANSEN | snow song

19 JUDY HULTMAN | by round pale paper lantern
I see your shoes

20 MYRA RIEDEMANN | horses
branding

22 MARGARET GERBER | tomorrow's prayer
on perfection
when I die

23 CAMILLA SPALDING | five poems

26 RENE DEANS | two poems

27-30 SENSORY REPORTING

Donna Davis - Jacki Winans

Patty McCarty - Molly Michel

Margaret Gerber - Jeannine Sova

Judy Hultman - Mary Kyle

Rene Deans - Myra Riedemann

luanne edquist

CITY

Across the square,
An unknown back has a name;
And I run, leaning the moveless air,
And the pigeons circle,
Tilt in the chiming sky.

But the named back
Turns, and again I have forged a face
By the Janus post.

And in this place,
This square with its stiffened leaves and birds,
All things have turned their seasons.
Leaves thinning to rain.
And I stood and did not move where
Summer itself was betrayer.

GARDEN

Moonlight scraping the curtains,
Flutter of clock. Through the window
The brushing of garden, lying fruit
And bones of the tree.

Leaves take
Their drying edges over the stones,
And the tree hangs its late fruit still
In the turning air.

This is the place
To circle with the knowledge
Of what it is to be alone after love.

16

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

AND BY WHAT WAY

A road preferred at first
Becomes, oh by city, by skyfall,
A thing as welcome as blow.
To be had, to be held
No longer with paper
Or beating of rain in the afternoon city.

And only those not admitted may enter;
Who grasps the obligation of mortality
Will come by candle or curse.

IMAGES

I

In the unleaved forest,
Branched rain thins its strings
And only the ends of logs
Have the yellow aster color.

II

Before the storm's hill,
This dandelion light twists
In the leaf-colored shade.
And in the wire and cracking of a branch,
The pebbled air is smooth.

Over the mountain's broken panes
The cloud rocks topple their edges.
And all the black cars
Shut with a noise of shells.

STATION

In the waiting room, ticketed faces.
People who have but one dimension
In each other's tiled vision.
And have no need to see
What headlines probe still-living flesh
Across the thick and turning continents.

These scheduled folk hold their
Singular futures flatly in a pocket,
And seeing only plains ruled by
Two rails of steel, they cannot,
Till they reach it, know the place
Where rails and bars will cross
Somewhere beyond horizon's blackened hearth.

cathryn hansen

SNOW SONG

I am the czar breathing his private tent:
Snow mellow as sugar
Marks the day apart.
You are eyes in regiments
The peacocks cry cold cries.
Tell me that this flesh was given man
To rise out of
Before he becomes inverted with age,
And drains his beard dry.

18

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

judy hultman

BY ROUND PALE PAPER LANTERN

The wind turns in the dark outside;
I hear it crush the leaves together
into their slack branches, but here
the surface of the pond is thin and black
and still; the fishes lay themselves just under it,
their lined fins waving cold to their cold scaled sides.

Through the squares of yellow window I can see
flat shapes of people; by round pale paper lantern laid
with shadows of flowers, I can see
crossing green veins in a narrow wrist.

I SEE YOUR SHOES

I see your shoes like ducks,
Your socks in huddles like the people after church;
The sun lays all its fingernails
With edges on the window.

'Wake!
For you have played upon me like a banjo,
O my music-monger love;
Count the bright strings!
You cannot know
How sweet sing lute and harp, vielle and lyre.

19

MILLS COLLEGE STUDENTS

myra riedemann

HORSES

I

This horse breaks glass in the lift of his eyelid
The nostrils blooming
And the banking eye.

A stallion comes forward
With long shapes slowly:
The funeral tilt of a hoof:
The flat hair slides
Under the moving fingers of skin.

His body is paned with the whiteness of muscles;
He makes the wind stand still
On his crystal withers.

II

Horses run with the closeness
Of a log corral.
Horses run, till their heads
Are together in the pressing
Of their sweated sides.

The sun is a shine
Of dust on the hairs.
Horses' heads turn
With the direction of their eyes.

Many colors of manes
And the long and separate
Hairs of tails
Are horses.

20

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

Horses, turning the wooden
Roundness of a small corral
Wooden eyes
And wooden hooves;
Hooves with no iron nails
And the dry earth on the heel
Are horses.

Shoulders of many
Reflected suns, and the wetness
Of half a day galloping:
Hair colored to the red
Of an inside nostril,
And a flaring white eye
Are horses.

BRANDING

The calf's hair lights red
And white, touching a horse's shoulder;
Turns lariat the tin side of the body,
And its landing cracks earth.
A horse, standing to the metal pull of the bit;
The red and white muscle sifts with the sunshine
Redness of blood.
Burning wood irons the day's hotness,
With the blue smoke spreading
The right blue eye.
The skin sparks open
Below the brand's burning.
Their tongues are the color of inside mouths.
They layer with grayness of ashes and blood
The dust-men moving, smoke-quick and lazy,
Wiping their hands on blood-blue Levis.

margaret gerber

TOMORROW'S PRAYER

Bless him Lord
And send him through all the outlines
While I hold up my ringless fingers,
Then wait a year in business.

We bought a corner lot
And they leveled the dirt and rocks
And threw away the cans and papers
And charged us leaf by leaf.

Send him with his arms
And let him kiss my mouth
And I'll cry on his hair.
I always cry outside
when I'm too, too much in love.

ON PERFECTION

If you handed me a crystal glass
And asked me to drink some pure liquid,
I could not.
I can't be something I am not
Try though the world would do,
Pushing upward that unseen thing
That you go calling after.
But if I stop, I'll fall
Man eaten and torn
From heaven
In silk blue rows
But on my own falling star.

22

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

WHEN I DIE

When I die I want to die
small and quiet;
A rush of sound and breath
no pain or pity shown
In the sun scarred room

Too many sleepless night faces,
Too many hands folded in spreading laps.
The sliding coverlet slips away,
and the faded flowers forgive.

camilla spaulding

FIVE POEMS

I

Wing over wing the bird sleeps
In the tree of the bear.

23

Like grazing cattle to the hock in mud,
Are the fallen stones.

Far onto the whetted water
Walks the spider,
Like a horse on eggshells.

MILLS COLLEGE STUDENTS

II

Has never quiet been so ever?
It is the running of leaves through paces;
It is the color of each same tree different;
It is frogs on metal leaves who open wide their lines
And find each other.
Never has quiet been so ever as this time.
The red air makes it of trees and frogs
And sky of fluid.

III

I have seen snow on unhilled earth;
On top of a half year wheat stalk;
In the hair of a dog;
Each piece of snow will cling and cold and crush
On a spinning tire.
Snow on the sky side of a branch;
One flake covers in one place
And others land next and near and not near
So that soon or late
Ground and black mud is under it
And feet will be sure, and sink in deep
To the large muscle of the tennis leg.

24

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

IV

This is my Aunt Ashton's funeral
And look at all the people not here.
She was good and kind, and an old pair of shoes
And a suit mended with paper
And mother says "people should appreciate."
But why?

My Aunt Ashton took me once to her safety pocket
To show me all the family sort of things.
She was good and kind, and an old cameo
And a rhinestone
And father says "there's nothing in that damn box"
And there isn't.

There's nothing in any box now
But my Aunt Ashton.

V

25

The beak and bone of bird
With feathers of wet
Trees himself while three days of rain
Fall on the oil of his head.

MILLS COLLEGE STUDENTS

rene deans

TWO POEMS

I

The small animals coming up with the water
They are wet and green
And shadowed with points of salt.
See the four-sided feet of birds and the nails of birds
Touching the sand and making nail-shaped circles.
How the motion of the water colors the sand
And the anemones move their fringes;
How the centers of their bodies wrinkle with the water!

II

Your nails the color of beaches touch me
And the touch of your hand is the coldness
Of the faces of clocks.
There are noises in the street outside my door
And the ice-like noise of money in a glass.
Oh the passing of old women in the street
The noise of their feet like the striking of matches.
The changing heads and eyes of children
Will watch you in the street.

26

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

SENSORY REPORTING

DONNA DAVIS — I throw the popcorn into the water
And the ring is not yet gone
Before the airless mouths of catfish
Open the water top.

The eucalyptus trees in the water
Are straight
With the dark and light movement
Of air touching water.
Trunks hang topless
Greener than the algae water;
And that light on the water
That the sun put there
Moves before the eye changes,
Giving the white hurt to the eye.

JACKI WINANS — The Drummer
The sweat comes down
The black
Of the fingers.

The white palm puts the drum
To move.
The one light
The shoulders hold
Comes to the forearm,
Then out to the sound
Of the drum.

— The square of window on the dark door
Puts light through the air.

PATTY McCARTY — Small greens
Where light is a color,
The redwood holds the branch's bird
That calls and cries the human warning.

SENSORY REPORTING

MOLLY

— The pulleys creak,
The sailors' hands grip rope, they pull:
Their hands and arms are the color
Of cornflakes.

MICHEL

— I must wait for the lions
Bounding
In colors of earth and sun.

— The shadow of a cloud
grays the grass...

Horses
Awake with white of eye and
napped lip trembling,
And edges of hoofs
meet quickly the angled grass,
The rise of oat-heads
is darkened suddenly.

MARGARET — Sun falls like a cluster of flocks

GERBER On sweat shirted boys;
They wade in the lilies
Their bodies cut at their ankles.

Goldfish lined with light
Leap in the diamond squared water;
The dogs lie boxed in light.

— And the stain of the sun
on the pebble-washed hills,
The water
sliding down like a sleeve.

JEANNINE — The image of the willow tree

SOVA Conforms to the surface of the water.

28

A SECTION OF POETRY BY

SENSORY REPORTING

— I look into the bowl and see my round face
Flat on the water,
And the water moves from itself
As my hands reach in:
And the liquid image is now in many shapes.

JUDY
HULTMAN

— The branch grows toward me,
Duller than shiny
Shinier than dry
Each end of it hung with water.

And the water that was light and black
Slips down my inside fingers to my wrists
And darkens my red shirt.

— Through the green bottle, I see
Eight stems joint-deep in water.

— And the flat swordfish dowled with fins
Hangs in the solid ocean.

MARY
KYLE

— The leaves turn as the unseen
Wind moves among them,
They reflect the sun's color, using
Raindrops to return the light.

Through the colorless air
The feeling of morning comes.

— The candle reflects the fire's orange
That moves as I turn.

RENE
DEANS

— My guitar
Has six strings
And shines with my hands.

SENSORY REPORTING

MYRA — My finger could cover the curve
RIEDEMANN Of the highway the bus driver drives on.

The house on the green edge
Is the size of the window ...

— The roundness of reflected bowls
Holds the petaled water,
The sunlight is green through
The flattened leaves.

The wind
Rubs the curtains against the shadowed air
On the other side of the glass,
the flattened birds,
the dandelion with its beetle-tilted leaf,
And the evening color;
And the sky setting
With the inside redness of a rubbed eye.

BOOK REVIEWS

— NEW POEMS BY AMERICAN POETS. Edited by Rolfe Humphries. New York: Ballantine Books; 179 pp.; 35¢.

— MID-CENTURY FRENCH POETS. Edited by Wallace Fowlie. New York: Twayne Publishers; 273 pp.; \$4.50.

30

To the average reader of poetry, the anthologist is the authority. He is the man who has read all the poetry of the period which he anthologizes—something the reader will not have had time to do for himself. Beyond this, he is assumed by the reader to be the man who has the ability to select for him, from the mass of this poetry, that which is best and worth preserving.

This is assuming a great deal.

Just why the critical use of the mind should be so difficult has never been entirely explained, nor why it is sometimes impossible for even a good critic to give us much more than an intelligent exposition of his own appreciations and prejudices.

The first difficulty, I suppose, might be that he needs, if he seldom has, an equal sensibility over the whole range of poetry: able to see good poetry in a rigid or conservative form, or in forms which the conservative would consider eccentric and suspect. But also there seems to be a necessary doubleness to critical thinking, the critic sometimes needing to have an almost immoderate sensitivity — even to poetry which the average reader would be inclined to depreciate — combined with an immoderate intolerance for anything which seems insufficient and mediocre.

I think that in compiling *New Poems by American Poets*, Mr. Humphries may be suspected of having the necessary sensitivity to certain elements in poetry, without any of the severity which would allow him to see that in many cases those poems in which he finds merit would have no such merit for the general cognizant reader — might even seem less than mediocre to those whose sensitivity is not identical with his own.

It is probably a fair judgment, therefore, to say that Mr. Humphries has not made a very successful anthology: that indeed he has succeeded rather less than almost any other reputable anthologist in making a useful selection. It is unfortunate that he allowed a book to be presented as "a magnificent collection (which) represents the best poetry being written in America today", etc. His mere selection of his favorite poems, without any claims made, might have more right to the reader's attention.

However this book, like most paper-backs, is inexpensive, and the reader may judge for himself.

In fairness to Mr. Humphries, it must be admitted that this concept of the anthologist is a novelty: viz., that he is a person having responsibility to his readers for his selection. There is even reason to wonder whether the basic work in selection of the best classic poetry in the language has been done — or rather, whether that poetry from past times has been selected, which would be most important for the contemporary reader.

A man who is familiar with science in a country where modern scientific concepts were not accepted, might find it refreshing to read a book from America in which such factors as Mendelian inheritance were taken for granted. On almost the same grounds, an American may enjoy reading *Mid-Century French Poets*, an anthology in which both editor and poets take for granted the concept that man's experience is not merely practical and logical but is concerned also with fantasy, dream and other non-rational elements — best expressed through fantastic imagery.

Such techniques are used also by some American poets. Yet their judgment in doing so has been held to be worse than suspect. The poets in this anthology, however, as well as the anthologist, seem to have solved this dispute to their satisfaction and proceed without self-consciousness to the methods of surrealism and associationalism — devices which the American poet uses stubbornly but with self-consciousness.

For instance Mr. Fowlie writes of "those who insist that an image appear in its own beauty isolated from the rest of the world, and independent of all keys and obvious explanations." . . . or "The image becomes the experience, but so changed that it is no longer recognizable."

Similarly the included poets will talk of the importance of trance or dream, while the American writer is likely to be speaking merely of the importance of "communication."

If the translation is only moderately good this of course is true of most translations. The book does seem to me to be a valuable one for the American reader. The French is included.

Lawrence Hart

Mills College

Summer Session

presents the following courses in Creative Literature
for men and women

COURSES

S 101 CREATIVE WRITING | 2 units | Writing of poetry and prose (expository and narrative) concurrent with study of these forms as used by representative modern authors. Individual criticism and analysis. MW, 1:10-3:45 p.m. Room E 10

S 182 or S 282 ELIOT AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES | 2 units
Study of Eliot's critical attitudes and influences, his poems and their background, literary and mythical references; detailed attention to *The Wasteland*, *The Four Quartets*, dramatic works. Study of contemporary writers influenced by *The Wasteland*.
TTh, 1:10-3:45 p.m. Room E 10

S 183 TEACHING WRITING TO THE GIFTED CHILD

3 units | Methods of teaching writing (prose and poetry) to the gifted child; designed primarily for teachers. Participation and observation in children's class (see page 16 of the catalogue) and S 101 above are integral parts of the course.

MW, 1:10-3:45 p.m.; two lecture-discussion periods per week; to be arranged; a minimum of two hours observation of children's class. Room E 10

REGISTRATION for adults will take place on Monday, 27 June, from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. in the Student Union. The regular class schedule will open on Tuesday, 28 June.

THE FOLLOWING COURSE FOR CHILDREN IS ALSO OFFERED:

S 1 CREATIVE WRITING | A class for gifted children between the ages of ten and fourteen designed to train the student in accurate communication through the writing of prose and poetry. Enrollment limited to those who can present evidence of talent in writing; interview with the instructor at least three weeks prior to registration (24 June) necessary. Communicate with the Office of the Summer Session for details and appointments for interviews. MTWThF, 11:10 a.m.-12 noon Room E 10

These courses will be taught by Lawrence Hart of the Mills College English Department.

